

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON VERMONT'S REACH UP PROGRAM



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January 31, 2004

Highlights

In September 2003, the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded Vermont high performance bonuses of \$1.3 million for success in providing affordable and accessible child care, helping low-income working families obtain food stamps, and increasing the proportion of children living in families with married parents.

Every family participating in the Reach Up program has a case manager. Case managers support parents' efforts to acquire the skills to gain and retain employment and develop behaviors that promote greater resiliency for the family as a whole.

Reach Up's comprehensive family assessment looks at thirteen areas of resiliency to ascertain the strengths and challenges for each member of a Reach Up family.

There are now fewer than 14,000 Vermonters receiving Reach Up or Postsecondary Education (PSE) benefits—an historic 25-year low. This milestone is even more impressive considered in the context of Vermont's increased population over the same period and changing economic conditions

P ATH expanded its collaboration with the Department of Aging and Disabilities' (DAD) Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) to provide appropriate services to Reach Up participants with disabilities and to identify and recommend changes to service delivery systems that make it difficult for these Vermonters to access service in a timely manner.

PATH has grant agreements with community-based organizations to provide services to Reach Up participants. The grant agreements include specific performance outcomes.

Vermont has met all of its federal work participation rate requirements, successfully moving families toward self-sufficiency and preserving our federal funds.

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PATH's Mission

Our mission is to help Vermonters find a path to a better life. To this end, we take on many roles: employment coach, health insurance provider, crisis manager, career planner, champion of families, and promoter of human potential. Most importantly, we are Vermonters helping Vermonters.

INTRODUCTION

Federal Welfare Reform

On August 22, 1996, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, known as the federal welfare reform bill or PRWORA, was signed. Title I of PRWORA created the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program to replace the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and JOBS programs (which were known as ANFC and Reach Up, respectively, in Vermont). TANF is funded through a block grant in contrast to the open-ended federal financial participation system of the past. TANF-funded assistance to families is limited to 60 months in the adult's lifetime unless the family is exempt under the hardship exception that applies to up to 20 percent of the caseload. States may use state funds to assist families that are not eligible for federal TANF assistance.

PRWORA gave states the opportunity to continue operation of welfare reform demonstration projects. Vermont continued its Welfare Restructuring Project (WRP) through completion on June 30, 2001, while making plans to transition from WRP to TANF by July 1, 2001.

TANF authorization ended September 30, 2002. While the House has passed and Senate Finance Committee has reported reauthorization bills, to date Congress has not passed reauthorization legislation other than to extend the TANF program through March 31, 2004.

If proposed TANF legislation is adopted, Vermont's Reach Up program will face significant challenges, particularly in the arena of work participation rates and the time and structure allowed for families to engage in activities that address barriers to work. As final legislation is developed, the department will analyze its impact on Reach Up and identify state legislation and regulation needing change.

State Welfare Reform

Vermont's 7-year Welfare Restructuring Project (WRP) ended June 30, 2001. The final evaluation report was published in September 2002 and is available upon request.

Since July 1, 2001, Vermont has been subject to all federal TANF requirements. Act 147 (2000), An Act Relating to Assisting Families to Attain Self-Sufficiency, created the Reach Up Program, built on the premises of WRP and effective July 1, 2001.

Key elements of Reach Up include:

ANFC and Reach Up were combined into one program, called "Reach Up". Reach Up has a financial assistance and a family services component.

As soon as a family is granted Reach Up financial assistance, the parent or caretaker is assigned a case manager and is required to participate in activities leading to employment.

An assessment of each family's strengths, skills, experience, and challenges occurs during the first 30 days of assistance, culminating in the creation of a Family Development Plan (FDP). The assessment includes a literacy evaluation.

Most parents and caretakers have a work requirement as soon as they are work ready, or at the end of 12 cumulative months of receiving Reach Up financial assistance, whichever occurs first. The number of hours varies depending on the household's situation. Modifications and deferrals of the work requirement may be granted.

Participants may meet their work requirement by engaging in unsubsidized or subsidized employment, community work experience, vocational training, or other activities as specified in federal and state law and regulations.

In recognition of the importance of reliable transportation, Reach Up allows two-parent families to have two vehicles excluded as a resource.

Failure to participate in FDP or work activities without good cause results in a fiscal sanction, beginning at \$75 per month with graduated increases. Housing protection is provided for six months.

In addition to the Postsecondary Education Separate State Program, Reach Up has separate state programs designed to preserve federal funding and Vermont's longstanding social policies.

Vermont law requires PATH to complete various evaluations and annual reports to the legislature.

This report is submitted pursuant to 33 V.S.A § 1134 (a). The following sections in this report correspond to the numerical paragraphs under subsection 1134 (a).

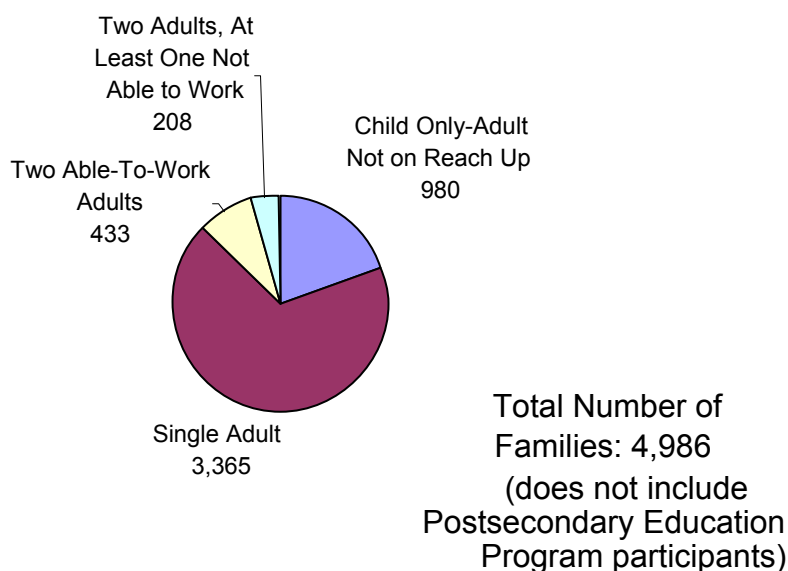
Readers may refer to page 19 for additional information about the acronyms and terms used in this report.

Section 1

Types of Barriers Facing Reach Up Families Seeking Economic Self-Sufficiency, the Number of Families with Each Type of Barrier, and the Frequency of Occurrence of Each Type of Barrier

To give context to the information in this report, the first two charts present a picture of the types of families participating in the Reach Up program and the number of adults in these families. These are average monthly figures for the period December 2002 through November 2003.

Types of Families in the Reach Up Caseload



Average Number of Adults Participating in Reach Up Program

Family Type		Average Number of Adults Participating in Reach Up Each Month (does not include Postsecondary Education Program participants)
	Child Only (child's parent or caretaker is not on Reach Up)	0
	Single Adult	3,365
	Two Able-To-Work Adults	866
	Two Adults, At Least One Not Able to Work	416
	Total Adults	4,647

Number of Reach Up Participants with Identified Barriers – Total for the Period January 2003 through December 2003

A brief description of some of the factors that may contribute to each barrier is included.

Types of Barriers	Number of Participants	% of Participants Assessed that have each type of barrier
Transportation – no safe/reliable car, no license, can't afford insurance	1,762	41%
Adult employment – minimum skills, poor work history, not matched with labor market	1,058	25%
Education – lacks essential skills, limited literacy, doesn't set education goals	1,146	27%
Finances – can't meet basic needs, bills in arrears, no knowledge of available help	1,322	31%
Health and safety – condition that limits employment choices, poorly nourished, untreated or poorly treated health problems, danger to self or others	886	21%
Shelter – temporary, transitional or unsafe housing, being evicted, poor rental history/references	781	18%
Working skills and habits – inappropriate clothing/hygiene, misses appointments or deadlines, doesn't meet expectations	510	12%
Social/emotional health – unable to cope with pressure, substance abuse, mental/emotional disturbances	661	15%
Legal issues – court issues pending, criminal record, family member incarcerated	773	18%
Family interactions – isolated, conflicts, subject to emotional or physical harm	315	7%
Child development – child has serious delays, high absenteeism, needs significant adult intervention, no childcare available	630	15%
Food and clothing – lack of resources for nutritious food and adequate clothing	303	7%
Community relations – negative relationship with neighbors, community	191	4%
Total Number of Participants Assessed*	4,310	
Average Number of Barriers/Participant	2.0	

**410 participants were assessed twice during this 12-month period. Since both of the assessments for these individuals are reflected here, the actual number of people receiving assessments was 3900.*

A deferment is a temporary postponement of the full work requirement. A deferred participant must have an FDP with an employment goal. The deferred participant must participate in activities, including work activities, that lead to the employment goal to the extent the participant is capable

Families with Deferments					
Type of Deferment*	Average Number of Families, by Type				
	Single Adult	Two Able-to-Work Adults	Two Adults, at Least One Not Able-to-Work	Child Only (Adult Not on RU)	Total
Awaiting medical decision	132	6	6	0	144
Medical condition < 90 days	103	2	2	0	107
Medical: Voc Rehab referral	392	2	3	0	397
Medical: SSI or Medical Review Team referral	3	0	0	0	3
Able to work part-time with medical condition	4	0	0	0	4
Child < 13 weeks	16	1	0	0	17
Child < 6 months	72	0	4	0	76
Child < 2 years but > 6 months	171	1	13	0	185
Needed in home	15	1	4	0	20
Child care not available	11	0	0	0	11
Transportation not available	8	0	0	0	8
In education (limited options)	6	2	0	0	8
Domestic violence barriers	8	0	0	0	8
Able to work part-time due to needed in home	4	0	0	0	4
No job available	0	0	0	0	0
Other	81	1	2	0	84
Total	1,026	16	34	0	1,076

**Figures represent the deferment status of the primary earning adult.*

Transportation and the lack of work skills and experience continue to be the top two among the barriers challenging Reach Up participants in their efforts to gain and retain employment. PATH's approach to helping participants mitigate the impact of these top two barriers is summarized below.

Transportation:

There is no single solution to help Reach Up participants secure and maintain reliable transportation. Reach Up supports a variety of measures focused directly on individuals, organizations that serve low income communities, and the communities in which participants live. A summary of each type of activity follows.

Reach Up supports individuals to obtain their licenses and register, insure, and repair automobiles. Reach Up also provides mileage reimbursement and allows an earned income disregard to compensate for expenses related to operating a vehicle. Reach Up supports

community-based organizations that provide on-demand transportation services, reliable vehicles for Reach Up participants, and credit to purchase vehicles.

Participants are encouraged to identify alternative transportation options such as public transportation, car pooling, and ride sharing when appropriate. When necessary, participants are asked to explore re-location as a strategy to resolve ongoing transportation issues.

An amendment to PATH's grant agreement with the Department of Employment and Training will allow the department to focus additional attention on the strategic development of worksites. An inventory of work placements will be maintained and compared to towns where Reach Up participants live. This process will identify both areas of opportunities and gaps that if addressed could mitigate the impact of transportation challenges around the state.

Work Skills and Experience:

Two specific initiatives are underway to maximize the resources and benefits PATH offers Reach Up participants who need work skills and experience.

PATH has been working closely with Vermont Adult Learning to modify the Getting Ready to Work program (GRTW). The new program offers adults with insufficient job skills an opportunity to gain both life and job-readiness skills. The program begins with a thorough job-readiness and educational assessment. Based on the results of the assessment, participants can be scheduled into one or more of five components including problem-solving, money management, job-readiness skills, and developmental placements in worksites. In addition, adults may be referred for services to gain adult essential skills or specific job skills. Services are structured as approved work activities so that adults may meet their federal work requirement while learning skills and attitudes that will help them gain and retain employment. The program is designed to maximize access and availability. GRTW operates statewide through grants with Vermont Adult Learning, the Northeast Kingdom Community Action Agency (in Newport and St. Johnsbury), the Springfield Area Parent Child Center, and the Sunrise Parent Child Center in Bennington. Implementation of the new program began in 2003; statewide operation is expected by early 2004.

In the fall of 2003, PATH was able to purchase new and enhanced services from the Department of Employment and Training. One of these services is employability assessments for Reach Up participants. The assessments will help participants define realistic employment goals, develop clear career paths, and identify the steps needed to gain and retain employment in their field of interest. Employability assessments will become available statewide in the early months of 2004. These employability assessments will be a companion piece to GRTW initial assessment and efforts to coordinate these services will be part of the implementation plan for launching this new service.

Section 2
Documentation of Participant Outcomes,
Including Specific Information Relating to:

the number of persons employed, by occupation, industry and wage;
the types of subsidized and unsubsidized jobs secured by participants;
any available information about outcomes for children who have participated in the Reach Up program, including objective indicators of improved conditions; and
the number of participating families involved in training programs.

Beginning July 1, 2001, Vermont became subject to the federal TANF work participation rates. Current federal law requires that the adults in states' TANF caseloads be engaged in work activities at specified rates for all families and 2-parent families. In Reach Up, these activities include employment, work experience, on-the-job training, job search, vocational education, job skills training, and school attendance.

For federal fiscal years (FFY) 2002 and 2003, the rates specified in the law were 50% for all families and 90% for 2-parent families. Because the rate of participation of families in the caseload does not reflect a state's success at moving families off assistance and toward self-sufficiency, the law gives credit against the required rates based upon the state's reduction in its caseload size since 1994. Vermont met its participation rate requirements for FFY 2002 (ending September 30, 2002). The following chart illustrates Vermont's participation rates for FFY 03 based on data for October 2002 through June 2003 (the latest figures available). With the caseload reduction credit, for FFY '03 Vermont must meet the rates of 9.2% for all families and 29.3% for 2-parent families.

Federal Work Participation Rates (FFY03)

	All Families	2-Parent Families
Average Work Participation Rate	24.3%	37.2%
Average Number of Families Satisfying Federal Work Requirement Through Work Activities	845	161

Information presented in the rest of this section represents a monthly average based on data from October 2002 through September 2003. It does not include the Postsecondary Education program.

Parents Participate in Training and Education Programs

Activity Type	Average # of Participants
Work Experience	260
On-the-Job Training	16
Vocational Education	54
Job Skills Training	281
Satisfactory School Attendance	333

Parents in the pre-work-ready stage and work-ready parents who need to improve their employability are supported in short-term work, training and education placements. Individuals unable to meet their work requirement because work is not available due to local economic conditions may engage in community service placements. Over the past year participants have been placed with municipalities, schools, community action agencies, senior meals sites, local housing authorities, parent-child centers, UVM, YMCA and the Salvation Army. Duties included office work, maintenance, cleaning and other services.

PATH continues to expand its efforts to provide job skills and vocational education to Reach Up participants. An approach that allows for regional differences in job market, training opportunities, and participant interests led PATH to invest in three types of initiatives:

Each of PATH's twelve district offices is provided a pool of training dollars that can be used to support job skills and vocational training. These dollars are used in combination with other funds to pay tuition for individuals. Examples of courses taken include pharmacy technician and commercial driver's license.

PATH, in partnership with the Work Education and Training Fund (WETF) program operated by the Department of Employment and Training (DET), agreed to reimburse the WETF program for every participant who successfully completes a training funded by WETF. PATH also agreed to provide up to \$10,000 additional funding to support outreach, orientation, and ongoing support to Reach Up participants. Examples of training funded through this partnership include medical office assistant training and automotive welding programs.

PATH issued its own Request for Proposals (RFP) for workforce development. Like the WETF fund, this RFP requires that proposals include employers' commitments to hire. Examples of workforce development include licensed nurse's aid and personal care attendant training programs, medical clerical program, commercial driver's license program, interior and exterior painting, and landscaping and groundskeeping. This RFP remains open. Beginning in SFY '04 PATH intends to work with the Department of Aging and Disabilities, the Community of Vermont Elders, health care providers, and others funding workforce development to develop and fund an integrated training system for health care providers that can be accessed statewide.

Families Combine Welfare with Work

On average, 1215 participants combined welfare with work each month. The charts below illustrate the types of occupations in which Reach Up participants worked, the industries these jobs were in and the hourly wages Reach Up participants are earning.

Reach Up Participants Employed by Occupation

Occupation	Percentage in Each Occupation	Average Number In Each Occupation
Sales	19%	226
Professional, Technical, Managerial	19%	225
Food Service	13%	163
Health Services (Nurses, etc.)	8%	95
Clerical	6%	72
Education (Teachers, etc.)	4%	50
Lodging Service	5%	56
Personal Service	3%	39
Domestic Services (private homes)	3%	36
Recreation	2%	29
Building Service	2%	25
Machine Work	2%	21
Transportation	1%	16
Structural Work	1%	13
Other*	4%	50
Unknown	8%	101
Total Participants Employed		1,215

**Each of the occupations consolidated in the "Other" category employed less than 1% of the participants.*

Reach Up Participants Employed by Industry

Industry	Percentage in Each Industry	Average Number of Participants
Services	49%	592
Retail Trade	13%	156
Transportation & Public Utilities	8%	92
Manufacturing	2%	29
Construction	2%	22
Agric/Forestry/Fishing/Mining	2%	19
Government	2%	18
Wholesale Trade	1%	11
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	<1%	5
Other or Unknown	22%	270
Total Participants Employed		1,215

Reach Up Participants' Wages

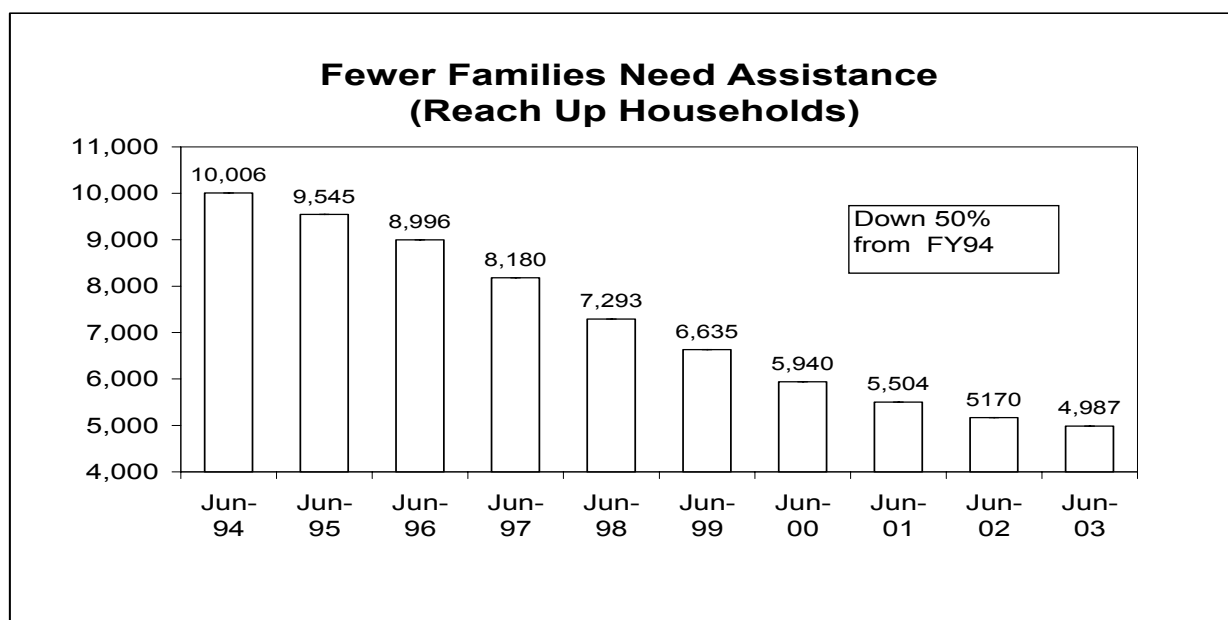
Wage	Percentage in Wage Range	Average Number of Participants
Under \$7.00 per hour	18%	224
\$7.00 - \$7.99 per hour	24%	293
\$8.00 - \$8.99 per hour	17%	210
\$9.00 - \$9.99 per hour	7%	87
\$10.00 - \$10.99 per hour	6%	79
\$11.00 - \$11.99 per hour	1%	14
\$12.00 per hour and over	4%	50
Unknown	21%	253
Total Participants Employed		1,215

Families Move from Welfare to Work

An indicator of Reach Up's success in moving families toward self-sufficiency and achieving better outcomes for their children is the number of families who have left the program as a result of increased income. Between December 1, 2002 and November 30, 2003, 1,580 families have ended their reliance on Reach Up for this reason.

Fewer Families Need Assistance

The following chart illustrates families' success in moving to financial independence. The timeframe spans from the implementation of Vermont's first welfare reform initiative in July 1994 through the current reforms.



Age of Children Participating in Reach Up Program

Age	Average # of Children	As % of All Children
0 to 1	813	10%
>1 to 2	686	8%
>2 to 3	623	7%
>3 to 6	1,630	19%
>6 to 10	1,719	20%
>10 to 16	2,218	26%
>16 to 18	582	7%
> 18	157	2%
Total	8,428	

A Key to Child Outcomes is Child Development

As discussed in Section 3 below, case managers provide comprehensive case management services to all families receiving Reach Up. The case manager uses a Family Support Matrix to assess 13 areas of family life. One of these areas is the family's children's development, including school attendance, behavior, independence, and availability of childcare. Our findings (see Identified Barriers chart on page 7) are that children are doing well—85 percent of the families do not indicate issues in this area.

Section 3

A Description of the Case Management System and the Training of Case Managers

Overview of PATH's Case Management System

PATH provides comprehensive case management services to all families receiving Reach Up financial assistance. PATH's case management system provides a primary case manager located in one of five types of organizations to all Reach Up families, and includes services provided by community-based organizations as needed and appropriate.

Case management begins as soon as a family is found eligible for financial assistance and continues until the family is no longer eligible for case management services. Case management may continue for up to six months after a Reach Up family is no longer eligible for financial assistance because of employment.

Case managers supported by PATH have three primary functions:

Complete in-depth assessments

Case managers gather information about each family member. Case managers use a Family Support Matrix to assess 13 areas of family life:

- *Basic Needs:* shelter, food and clothing, transportation, and finances
- *Family and Individual Health and Resiliency:* health and safety, child development and education, social and emotional health including substance abuse, family interactions, legal, and community relations
- *Employability:* adult education, employment, work skills and habits

Case managers, in consultation with family members and consideration of other resources, determine whether or not the areas listed above support the family's efforts to achieve economic self-sufficiency, interfere with these efforts, or have no impact.

See charts in Section 1 for additional information about barriers and deferments.

Negotiate a Family Development Plan

Based on initial and ongoing assessment results, case managers work with the adults in a family to identify realistic employment goals. Once employment goals are set, case managers work with these families to identify activities and services that would support the adults' efforts to achieve their goals. The Family Development Plan (FDP) details the activities a family will complete and the support services the family will need to participate in agreed upon activities. The FDP functions as a working contract between the Department and the family.

Provide ongoing support and assistance

Once the assessment and FDP are completed, case managers meet at least monthly with families to discuss progress on the activities detailed on the FDP. As needed, case managers work with families to change or modify plans, identify additional resources or activities, and initiate or support problem-solving efforts.

To better meet the diverse needs of Reach Up participants, PATH provides case management services through its 12 district offices, Employment and Training (DET) and Vocational Rehabilitation offices, 15 Parent Child Centers (PCCs), and colleges where Postsecondary Education (PSE) program participants go to school.

In general, PATH case managers provide services to single parents, DET case managers provide services to two-parent households when both parents are able-to-work, Vocational Rehabilitation provides services to participants found to have a disability, Parent Child Centers provide services to minor and young parents, and PSE case managers provide services to participants enrolled or preparing to enroll in two- or four-year degree programs.

Background and Training of Case Managers

Entry-level requirements for case managers vary from organization to organization. PATH requires that in-house case managers have at least a bachelor's degree or equivalent in an appropriate field of study and experience in a related position before they begin providing these services. External contractors set their own entry-level standards and PATH relies on their hiring practices to ensure that case managers have the requisite skills.

Post-employment training for case managers include:

- Overview of PATH programs, services, and benefits
- Basic and Advanced Interviewing
- Reach Up Services Training
- Domestic Violence
- Substance Abuse
- Reach Up ACCESS computer system
- Update training on programs, regulations, and implementation practices

In 2003, PATH awarded a contract to the Professional Development Program at the State University of New York at Albany to design and deliver case management training. During Phase I of the contract, SUNY was to complete a series of field visits, interviews, observations, and focus groups sufficient enough to propose a training design. Phase I is expected to be completed by early February of 2004. Once the design has been approved the actual development of curriculum and materials will begin. The training will be offered in five different sites around Vermont for case managers and their supervisors. Given the length, intensity, and thoroughness of the training, PATH anticipates that this effort will result in a significant change in how case managers do their work and that this change will benefit both the participants in their efforts to gain economic independence and the department in its efforts to continue to meet federal welfare reform requirements.

In addition to training, the work of case managers is supported in five other ways:

Supervisory Case Reviews: Supervisors regularly review case files and then use the results of these reviews to work individually with case managers to improve casework practices. These reviews also include client contacts to assess the quality of customer service.

Mentors: New case managers are often paired with experienced case managers.

Program Performance Audits: Random audits of files are conducted as part of a quality assurance and continuous improvement effort. Audits are conducted in both case documentation and casework practice. Findings are used to determine areas in which case managers may require additional training or coaching and areas that form the basis for periodic 'Best Practices' reports.

Case Manager Meetings: District offices maintain regularly scheduled meetings among case managers. Agendas for the meetings may vary, but the groups typically discuss resources and issues of local concern, brainstorm around particularly difficult situations, and meet in smaller teams to coordinate work with families they serve in common.

Work Sessions: PATH conducts work sessions for specific topics as needed. During 2003 a session focused on PATH's business plan review process. PATH plans a session in SFY '04 on preparing Reach Up participants to apply for the Postsecondary Education (PSE) program and on best practices in reviewing PSE education plans.

Section 4

Data about the Food Stamp Participation of Households Who Have Left Reach Up During the Last Fiscal Year

Section 5

Data about the Enrollment of Individuals Who Have Left Reach Up During the Last Fiscal Year in a Health Care Assistance Program

To put the following chart in context, a point of reference may be helpful. In November 2002, of the 4,928 households (12,850 individuals) who participated in the Reach Up program, 4,266 (87%) also received food stamp benefits. This means that approximately 13% did not participate in the program while receiving Reach Up benefits and having the opportunity to apply for food stamp benefits on the combined application form.

The following chart is modeled after the chart designed by the federal government for states to provide information about continuance of medical assistance to compete for a TANF High Performance Bonus. The milepost for this data is 4-months after Reach Up benefits end. It has been adapted to report similar data about food stamp participation of families whose Reach Up assistance has ended. When Reach Up benefits end, the family's case manager determines whether the family remains eligible for food stamp benefits.

Reach Up Leavers' Participation in Food Stamps – Fiscal Year 2003

	Quarter end Sep'02	Quarter end Dec'02	Quarter end Mar'03	Quarter end June'03
1. Total number of individuals who left Reach Up	4,412	3,806	3,449	4,069
2. Those in #1 who were <u>not</u> receiving RU in the 4 th month after leaving RU	3,563 (81%)	3,145 (83%)	2,781 (81%)	3,326 (82%)
3. Those in #2 who were enrolled in food stamps at the time of leaving RU	2,981 (68%)	2,693 (71%)	2,422 (70%)	2,887 (71%)
4. Those in #3 who were also enrolled in food stamps in the 4 th month after leaving RU	1,376 (31%)	1,369 (36%)	1,154 (33%)	1,252 (31%)

Our state is a leader in providing health care assistance to children and families. While a family of three loses eligibility for Reach Up when their income reaches approximately \$12,000 a year, the adults will be eligible for transitional Medicaid until their annual income

reaches \$28,240 and their children remain eligible for Dr. Dynasaur until the family's income tops \$45,800 (even higher income if the family pays for child care).

As with food stamps, the family's case manager is required to determine the family's continuing eligibility for Medicaid/Dr. Dynasaur when Reach Up benefits end.

Reach Up Leavers' Participation in Medicaid and Dr. Dynasaur – Fiscal Year 2003

	Quarter end Sep'02	Quarter end Dec'02	Quarter end Mar'03	Quarter end June'03
1. Total number of individuals who left Reach Up	4,412	3,806	3,449	4,069
2. Those in #1 who were <u>not</u> receiving RU in the 4 th month after leaving RU	3,563 (81%)	3,145 (83%)	2,781 (81%)	3,326 (82%)
3. Those in #2 who were enrolled in a medical assistance program at the time of leaving RU	3,479 (79%)	3,065 (81%)	2,683 (78%)	3,173 (78%)
4. Those in #3 who were also enrolled in a medical assistance program in the 4 th month after leaving RU	2,662 (60%)	2,474 (65%)	2,107 (61%)	2,344 (58%)

Section 6

Summary of All Interim and Final Reports Submitted by Independent Evaluation Contractors to the Agency or the Department Relating to the Reach Up Program

During the last legislative session, the General Assembly repealed 33 V.S.A. §1134(c) after PATH recommended postponement or repeal of the requirement for the following reasons:

The cost of contracting for the evaluation would not be a prudent expenditure during a time of fiscal constraint in state government; and

The evaluation might not accomplish the intended outcome as changes in TANF reauthorization could require Vermont to modify Reach Up during the evaluation period and distort the results.

Acronyms and Terms

ABLE-TO-WORK Free of any physical, emotional or mental condition that would prevent the individual from engaging in any combination of the work activities for at least 35 hours/week.

ANFC Aid to Needy Families with Children. The name of Vermont's welfare program through 6/30/01. (See Reach Up)

BARRIER Any physical, emotional or mental condition; lack of educational, vocational or other skill ability; lack of transportation, child care, housing, medical assistance or other services or resources; domestic violence circumstances; caretaker responsibilities or other conditions or circumstances that prevent an individual from engaging in employment or other work activity.

BLOCK GRANT A federal funding mechanism that sets a maximum funding level. The TANF block grant for Vermont is \$47.4 million per year. Prior to PRWORA, welfare was funded as an entitlement program.

FAMILY BONUS Up to \$50.00 per month is given to Reach Up families and not counted in their grant – based on whether child support was paid to OCS by a noncustodial parent two months prior. Formerly known as DEFRA, disregard or passalong. (See also Parent Share)

FAMILY SUPPORT MATRIX Primary assessment tool in determining a participant's work status. It forms the foundation for the family's FDP.

FDP Family Development Plan. An individualized written plan developed by the case manager with involvement of the family that charts the family's participation in the services component of Reach Up. The plan identifies an employment goal and describes the goals, tasks, services and timeframes for completion of the FDP.

MOE Maintenance of Effort. A provision of the TANF block grant that requires states to continue to spend state funds on assistance for families. Vermont's annual requirement is \$27.4 million (\$25.7 million if TANF work requirement rates are met).

OCS Office of Child Support. The state office responsible for administration of child support activities including paternity establishment and support collection.

PARENT SHARE A portion of the Reach Up financial assistance benefit that is based on current child support from two months prior (if any). It is sent to the family by PATH. This was formerly referred to as child support and was formerly sent to the family by OCS.

PATH The Department of Prevention, Assistance, Transition, and Health Access, formerly known as the Department of Social Welfare (DSW). The state department responsible for the administration of Reach Up financial assistance and case management, and the health insurance, food stamps, fuel assistance, general assistance, and essential person programs.

PARTICIPATION PHASES Adults move toward work and independence from Reach Up financial assistance by progressing through the phases of the Reach Up service component. The four phases are: application phase, pre-work-ready phase, work-ready phase and employment phase. Participation in each of the second and third phases is limited to 12 cumulative months for each adult during a lifetime. Not all adults will spend 12 months in each of these phases (many, only a short time) and some will skip the work-ready phase and move right to the employment phase.

PRWORA Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act. Federal legislation passed in August 1996, commonly called welfare reform, that among other things created TANF. The authorizing legislation for TANF expired 9/30/02. A current continuing resolution funds the program through March 31, 2003.

PSE Postsecondary Education. A separate state program that enables low-income Vermont parents to receive financial assistance stipends, case management, and support services while pursuing two- or four-year postsecondary education degrees.

REACH UP (RU) As of July 1, 2001, Vermont's welfare (TANF) program that has a financial assistance component and a services component. PATH staff determine a family's eligibility for Reach Up.

TANF Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. The federal welfare program name and block grant funding source enacted under PRWORA in August 1996.

TIME LIMIT The federal limit of 5 cumulative years of TANF-funded benefits to a family. There is a 20% hardship exemption. A state may use state funds to continue to support a family not eligible for TANF. Currently, Vermont does not have an "end of benefits" policy.

VR (VOC REHAB) Vocational Rehabilitation. A division of the state Department of Aging and Disabilities (DAD) that partners with PATH to work with Reach Up participants.

WORK ACTIVITIES The activities that participants must engage in to fulfill their work requirement. An approved activity is one approved by the case manager as an FDP requirement. A countable activity is one that can be counted toward the hours of a participant's work requirement. Countable work activities include: unsubsidized employment; job search; subsidized employment; work, training and education placement; community service placement; work experience; vocational education; job skills training; basic education directly related to employment; and self-employment. Activities may be restricted in time or scope.

WORK REQUIREMENTS The requirement to participate in work activities. The participant must work or engage in countable work activities for 20, 30 or 40 hours, depending on the family composition.

WRP Welfare Restructuring Project. Vermont's 7-year welfare reform that began July 1, 1994, and ended June 30, 2001. When WRP ended, Vermont became subject to all federal TANF requirements.

